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ON PAGE **A1**

NEW YORK TIMES
22 May 1985

U.S. MAY SOON STOP TAKING REFUGEES FROM THAI CAMPS

By BERNARD GWERTZMAN
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 21 — State Department officials said today that the United States would soon stop processing Cambodian refugees in Thailand for resettlement in this country.

Unless there is a change in plans, this would mean the end of a program that has brought 120,000 Cambodians to the United States since Indochina became Communist in 1975.

The officials explained the cutoff by saying that no more Cambodians in Thailand were deemed eligible for admission. Of the 25,000 in the main refugee camp, at Khao-i-Dang, all but 2,000 have been processed and deemed ineligible, the officials said.

Some Linked to Communists

Those found ineligible are said to have falsified their background, failed to meet the criteria for admission, or had a connection to the Khmer Rouge, the Communists who have been accused of genocide while they ruled Cambodia from 1975 until they were ousted by the present Vietnamese-backed Government in 1979.

The remaining interviews are expected to be completed by June 7, officials said, unless there is a decision to reopen the program and re-interview those who have been previously turned down.

There is another category of 4,300 Cambodians at Khao-i-Dang who were not officially accepted by Thailand as refugees but have been allowed to remain. With Thai permission, the United States and other Western countries would also review their eligibility, the State Department officials said.

Some Might Be re-Examined

Selected cases among those rejected may be re-examined if new information is produced, officials said.

The impending cutoff has aroused concern among some State Department officials with experience in Indochinese affairs. A department official said the problem had been brought to the attention of Secretary of State George P. Shultz, who is reviewing it.

"It is not acceptable to say we will stop processing on June 7," said a State Department official who has been seeking a change. "What will happen is that the Thais will bulldoze the camp and force all of the 25,000 to the border."

The United States is not the only country taking refugees, but officials said the 25,000 remaining in the camp have been rejected by virtually all other countries.

In addition to the 25,000 officially classified as refugees, there are 230,000 so-called border Cambodians who were driven into Thailand by recent Vietnamese military activities and are living in camps on the border. Thailand intends to induce them to return to the Cambodian side of the border as soon as the situation permits, State Department officials said.

Since 1975, the United States has admitted 740,000 refugees from Indochina, State Department officials said, including 480,000 Vietnamese, 145,000 Laotians and 120,000 Cambodians. Altogether 1.5 million Indochinese have been resettled in third countries, including the United States, the officials said.

Although President Reagan and Mr. Shultz favor continued aid, problems have arisen because the Thais discourage the entry of more refugees and because some within the Administration and in Congress feel that most people entitled to be allowed entry into the United States have been admitted.

Two Groups Are Exceptions

Among the exceptions are those held by Vietnam in so-called re-education camps and Amerasian children, to whom the United States has pledged help.

The children have been coming to the United States on a regular basis, but Vietnam has apparently reneged on an earlier offer to let the prisoners leave.

The United States is committed to receive 50,000 Indochinese refugees a year through the 1985 fiscal year.

They are mainly Vietnamese boat people who are allowed to leave Vietnam through a United Nations-managed program and have made it safely to Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and other Asian countries, and as well as Cambodians and Laotians who are in Thailand and have been processed for admission to the United States.

The Thais have been refusing to admit more Laotians, mainly Hmong hill people, who have been trying to cross the Mekong River, State Department officials said.

Hmong With U.S. Connections

There is supposed to be a screening program with United Nations participation to make sure that Hmong with American ties, such as those who fought in an army organized by the Central Intelligence Agency, are permitted to stay in Thailand for processing. But Roger Winter, director of the United States Committee for Refugees, said today that this program was not yet in effect.

The Thais contend that almost all the Hmong now seeking refuge are "economic migrants" with no valid claim to refugee status. This view is shared by some staff aides on Capitol Hill who in the past favored the admission of Indochinese.

Another problem involves Vietnamese who do not leave by boat, but travel overland through Cambodia. About 4,000 are in Thailand, and the Thais have ruled them ineligible as refugees.

American officials would also like an opportunity to interview these Vietnamese to make sure that those with American connections may be admitted.